United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1578
8 February 1994

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General tells audience at Columbia University that only United Nations can provide global network needed to address issues crucial to development; says Members must provide political will to see Organization's tasks fulfilled.

+ Graham Blewitt appointed by Secretary-General as Acting Deputy Prosecutor of international war crimes tribunal; appointment is at suggestion of Tribunal Prosecutor, Ramon Escovar-Salom.

+ President of General Assembly deplores shelling in Sarajevo on Saturday and calls punishment of perpetrators; calls for observance of Olympic Truce; Bosnian President promises observance of Truce; Human Rights Commission condemns "horrible massacre" in Sarajevo.

+ United Nations appeals for humanitarian assistance for some 6.5 million people in the Sudan affected by war or drought; says intense fighting last year and again in recent days has increased number in need.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, delivering the "Gabriel Silver Memorial Lecture" at Columbia University yesterday, said that only the United Nations could provide the global network to address the complex issues so crucial to development -- peace-building, democratization, regional integration, human rights and the environment. "As the voice for the poorest nations, the United Nations is critical to the cause of development," he said.

Turning to peace-keeping, he said that the Organization had begun to create a second generation version, in contrast to that which had filled a critical need during the cold war years. Comprehensive efforts, like those which had succeeded in Cambodia, would become increasingly necessary to help States survive. The United Nations heard and responded to needs for assistance wherever they were felt; it should not pick and choose between suffering peoples. "For the first time in its history," he said, "the United Nations is involved in more peace-keeping, development, humanitarian and social activities which do not appear in the press than those which do."

(more)

For information media--not an official record

The Secretary-General said that the extraordinary opportunities of this moment in history required an extraordinary response. Member States should see the Organization as the projection of their will, not as something separate and apart. The political will and authority had to be brought to bear on each United Nations resolution, so that its tasks could be seen through to their end, with mandates and missions backed by the financial and material means to do the job. For millions of people across the world, he stressed, the United Nations was more than an instrument of peace and cooperation among nations; it was the repository of hope for humanity.

* * *

The Secretary-General has announced the appointment of Graham Blewitt as Acting Deputy Prosecutor of the International Tribunal for the prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia. His appointment is at the suggestion of the Prosecutor of the Tribunal, Ramon Escovar-Salom.

Mr. Blewitt, who takes up his position in The Hague on 17 February, will be responsible for the preliminary organization of the Office of the Prosecutor. One of his first tasks will be to coordinate with the War Crimes Commission in Geneva the transfer to The Hague of its data base of evidence and the handling of ongoing investigations into alleged violations of international humanitarian law.

* * *

The President of the General Assembly, S.R. Insanally, has deplored the incident on Saturday in Sarajevo, in which 68 civilians were killed and scores wounded, and he called for every effort to ascertain and punish the perpetrators. He appealed to all parties to the conflict to cease all hostilities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, "in order to create an atmosphere conducive to the resumption of peace negotiations within the framework of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia".

Recalling that Sarajevo was the site of the 1984 Winter Games, the President called on all parties to observe a truce, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/11 of 25 October 1993, for at least the duration of the current Olympic Games. This, he said, could provide an occasion to resume negotiations.

In response to the start of the Truce on Saturday, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic yesterday sent a message to the head of the International Olympic Committee. He said that his people would commit themselves to its observance, "as well as to the release of prisoners, hoping that these actions will meet their aims".

The Commission on Human Rights, assembled in Geneva at its fiftieth session, has expressed shock at the "horrible massacre" at the market square in Sarajevo on Saturday. It described the shelling of the civilian population of the city as part of "a pattern of despicable and outrageous violations of

(more)

international humanitarian law and of human rights", and called for resolute action by the international community to halt such violations.

* * *

The United Nations today launched an appeal for humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of some 6.5 million people in the Sudan who have been affected by war or drought. The appeal calls for $279.7 million, to cover food aid and distribution, nutrition and health services, seeds and tools, and the repatriation of Ethiopian refugees. According to a United Nations spokesman, intense fighting last year led to an upsurge in the number of people in need, and over the last few days the situation has been aggravated by a new military campaign in southern Sudan.

Humanitarian aid had been reaching more and more people, as key portions of agreements regarding such assistance were implemented. An urgent response is sought to today's appeal, to enable the Organization to maintain the effectiveness of its efforts in the country.

* *** *